



State Representative John H. Frey

LOCAL ISSUES

Route 7 Widening Project Underway

In August, the state officially broke ground on Phase 1 of the Route 7 widening/reconstruction project. The project will widen the roadway from Route 35 in Ridgefield, northerly to the existing interchange at Wooster Heights Road in Danbury (at Interstate 84). The initiative will widen the two-lane roadway to four lanes and improve intersections at Starrs Plain Road, West Starrs Plain Road and Bennetts Farm Road.

Phase one will comprise a 2.1-mile section, beginning in Ridgefield and is expected to be completed in September 2007. It will include widening from Route 35 to just north of the Indian Trading Post and installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Bennetts Farm Road. Two lanes of traffic will be open at all times.

It has been a very long wait to see this project get underway. The state's contract for the project allows construction to take place 24 hours a day, excluding peak am and pm commuting times. Whatever inconveniences are associated with the construction will be worth the end result. It will ultimately reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of life for our community.

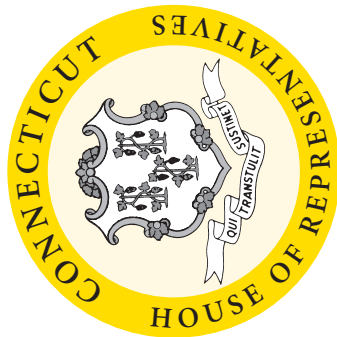
Boehringer-Ingelheim Expansion

The State Bond Commission has approved a \$500,000 grant to aid in the expansion of the Boehringer-Ingelheim Pharmaceutical plant on the Danbury-Ridgefield border. The funds will be used for the design of infrastructure and roadway improvements in the vicinity of the plant. The improvements will also better facilitate the anticipated increase in visitor and employee traffic at the facility. The plant is expected to create an additional 500 jobs during the next five years. Boehringer-Ingelheim is not only a valued large employer but an outstanding member of the community as well. I look forward to the state making a further commitment to the expansion project.



Representative Frey (left) and other state and local officials take part in the August 2005 groundbreaking of the Route 7 widening project.

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Proudly Serving the 111th District
Ridgefield ★ Connecticut



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2005 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative

JOHN H. FREY

Proudly Serving the 111th District

Ridgefield ★ Connecticut

Representative Frey
is sworn in at opening
day of the 2005
Legislative Session.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Increased Penalties For Driving With A Suspended License, And Driving Under the Influence (DUI)

Public Act 05-215 establishes strict penalties for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended driver's license. Under the new legislation, anyone convicted of a second incident of driving with a suspended license will serve a mandatory 30 day jail sentence. The court can also impose additional penalties for repeated offenses. In addition, current law requires an administrative license suspension process for drivers who refuse to submit to a blood alcohol test or whose test results indicate an elevated BAC (.08% or more or .02% or more if the driver is under age 21). The new law doubles the license suspension periods if the offender is under age 21. This increase also applies to nonresident operating privileges.

Cell Phone Ban

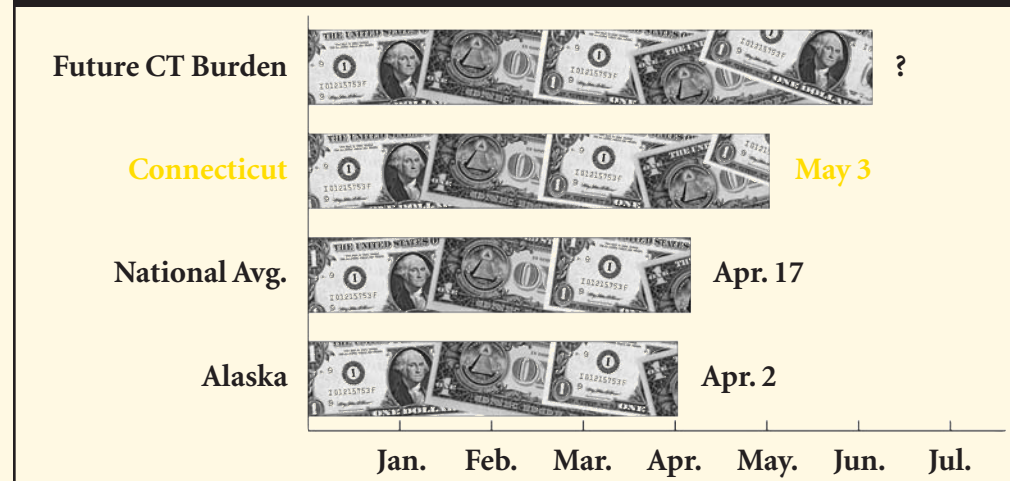
Public Act 05-159, which I cosponsored, bans the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. As of October 1, 2005, it is illegal for drivers to use hand-held cell phones unless they are communicating an emergency situation to an emergency response operator, hospital, physician's office or health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department. Under the legislation, violations are punishable as infractions, with fines of up to \$100.

Graduated Drivers Licenses

The Legislature passed legislation to address problems with the state's 2003 graduated driver's license law, which was intended to limit the number of teenage passengers in vehicles driven by 16 or 17-year old drivers. However, that law also restricted families from riding in the same car if a new 16 or 17 year old driver is behind the wheel. Public Act 05-54 removes the limit on immediate family passengers when the new driver is accompanied by at least one parent or guardian. It also increases, from 8 to 20 hours, the minimum amount of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training a 16- or 17-year old must have before qualifying for licensure.

In addition, this new law prohibits a 16- or 17-year old licensed driver from driving from 12:00 a.m. through 5:00 a.m. unless he or she is traveling because of employment, school or religious activities, or medical necessity. I cosponsored PA 05-54 because statistics show graduated license laws have a positive effect. I'm hopeful that increased training and a prohibition on unnecessary driving in the middle of the night will go a long way toward reducing the number of accidents among our teen drivers.

CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS WORK 123 DAYS OUT OF THE YEAR JUST TO PAY THEIR TAXES



PUBLIC HEALTH

Cardiac Care

The General Assembly approved legislation requiring state agencies to review ways to use data collected at health care facilities to improve cardiac care. Public Act 05-167 requires the Quality of Care Advisory Committee, which advises the Department of Public Health on quality of care issues, to examine and evaluate possible ways that the state's current data collection systems can be used to measure cardiac outcomes and the potential for statewide use of this data collection system. The advisory committee must report its results and recommendations to the Legislature's Public Health Committee by Dec. 1, 2007.

Patients' Rights

Public Act 05-128 requires hospitals to notify each patient in writing, upon the patient's admission, of his specific rights under the hospital's conditions of participation in Medicare. Notification must also inform the patient on compliant procedures, including how to contact the Department of Public Health (DPH).

GOVERNMENT REFORM

New Ethics Board

In recent years, it had become clear that the existing configuration of the state Ethics Commission could not properly address alleged ethical misconduct by state officials. I cosponsored Public Act 05-183, which abolishes the state's current nine-member State Ethics Commission (SEC) and establishes the Office of State Ethics (OSE) and a nine-member Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board as its successor. Establishing a completely new office, with better defined powers and structure, will help restore trust in state government.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Protection Against Identity Theft

I cosponsored Public Act 05-148, which allows consumers to freeze their credit report and requires businesses to inform the affected consumers if there has been a security breach involving their computerized personal information. The law prohibits a credit rating agency from releasing a frozen credit report, or any information in it, without the consumer's express authorization. It authorizes most types of businesses to deem a credit application incomplete, and an insurer to deny an application, if it finds that a consumer's credit report is frozen.

SENIORS

Study of Elderly Housing Complexes

Public Act 05-239 will address concerns about state-assisted elderly housing projects. It requires state social service agencies to assist local housing authorities to identify and access their services and several agencies to develop plans detailing their outreach efforts, available services, and crisis intervention activities. The act also requires a comprehensive assessment of rental assistance needs for state-assisted elderly and disabled housing projects.

SPENDING AND TAXES

2005-2007 State Budget

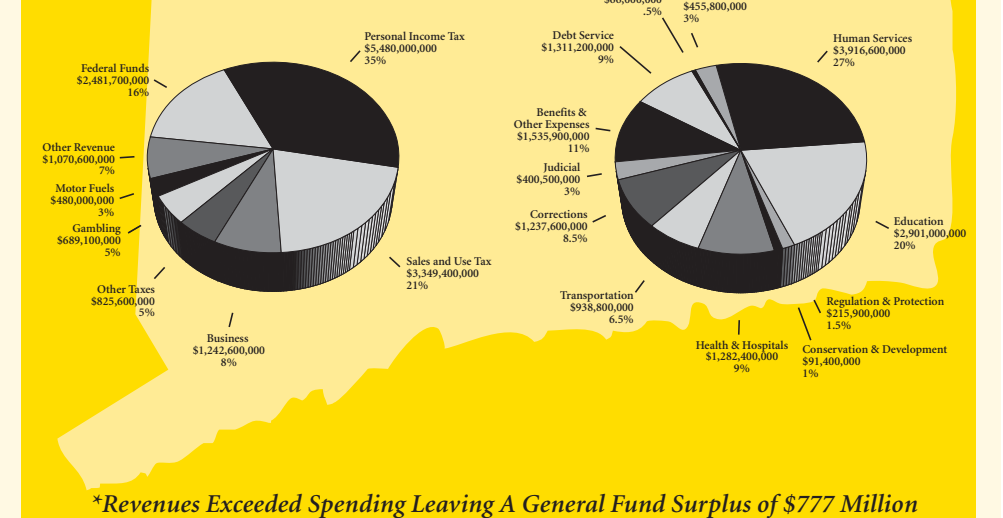
While there were a number of good points in the 2005-2007 budget package that was approved this year, it also contained exorbitant spending increases (12 percent) and tax hikes (\$738 million). On the positive side, the Town of Ridgefield will receive \$1,929,764 in state aid in 2005-2006, an increase of \$104,966.

New Tax Study

This year, the Legislature's Program Review and Investigations Committee commissioned a comprehensive study of Connecticut's taxation system. The study will recognize that Connecticut's state and local tax system relies heavily on a few major taxes to fund most state and local services. There have been studies of various aspects of Connecticut's state and local tax system in the past several years. However, there has not been a comprehensive look at the entire system since 1991.

BUDGET ENDING JUNE 30, 2005 THE 2005 GENERAL FUND AND THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND SPENDS \$14.4 BILLION

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



*Revenues Exceeded Spending Leaving A General Fund Surplus of \$777 Million